



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

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CGA Government Administration and Elections Committee

February 13, 2015, Public Hearing

Opposition to:

SB 601 AA ELIMINATING OVERVOTING FOR A CANDIDATE

Comments submitted by Yvonne D. Senturia, Election Laws Specialist

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The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a nonpartisan, statewide organization committed to effective public policy, the active involvement of citizens in their government and improving the electoral process. We believe that the right to vote with confidence in the election process must be guaranteed, and that election procedures should minimize voter inconvenience. We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on SB 601 *An Act Eliminating Overvoting for a Candidate*.

The proposed changes are not necessary. Current tabulators are programmed to count only one vote for a candidate who is cross-endorsed by two political parties. In the event that a candidate is cross endorsed and an elector casts more than one vote for such candidate, current law (statute 9-242) includes a specific formula for the moderator to use in allocating these cross-endorsed votes between the relevant major and minor party.

The proposed changes place an undue burden on voters, whose ballots clearly indicate the candidate they wish to elect. When a voter has cast a vote for cross-endorsed candidates on each party line where the candidate is listed, it is clear who they want to vote for. Even if it were possible to notify all these voters before they leave the polling place, there is also the risk that busy voters would not stay and complete a second ballot under these circumstances.

The proposed changes risk loss of votes for candidates, and disenfranchise absentee voters, overseas and military ballots. The principle intent of the voter should govern the counting of votes. If the busy voter does not stay and redo the ballot, or if the voter is not present on election day to complete a second ballot, a vote would be lost in a situation where it is absolutely clear which candidate should receive that vote. To disenfranchise the voter just because the party affiliation is unclear is clearly contrary to principles of fairness.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this bill.